Now, let the Minister answer Question No. 247 ...(*Interruptions*)... I seek your cooperation to allow the Question Hour to proceed. Thank you... Q. No. 247.

ICDS in a mission mode

*247. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:††
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister has declared that the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme has been put in a mission mode in the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, whether Government was contemplating some kind of accreditation to NGOs and also ratings and incentives, to motivate them to do good work by 2020;

(c) whether India would emerge as the youngest population in the world and the mandate for the Ministry was to prepare the nation to achieve excellence; and

(d) if so, which other schemes, the Ministry is considering to improve the child plans in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) It is proposed to restructure the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme and implement it in a Mission Mode during the Eleventh Plan period. The details of the revamped Scheme are being worked out.

(c) and (d) As per the Census of India 2011, the youth population in the age group of 15-24 years is expected to increase to 240 million by 2011. The Ministry prepared a National Plan of Action for Children 2005. This Plan includes goals, objectives strategies and activities for improving nutritional status of children, reducing IMR and MMR, increasing enrolment ratio and reducing drop out rates, universalization of primary education, increasing coverage for immunization etc. The Plan also harmonized the goals for children set in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in 2002 and the goals for children in related Ministries/Departments.

Apart from ICDS, the other Schemes of the Ministry for the benefit of children include Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the children of working mothers, Grant-in-aid scheme for voluntary organizations, Scheme for Welfare of Working Children in Need of Care and Protection, Central Adoption Resource Agency and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Sir, through you, I would like to inform the Minister that there have been some media reports that there is a move for centralization of purchase at the Ministry level for supplementary nutrition in ICDS. Will the Minister clarify as to how the purchases will be done?

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Supriya Sule.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, may, I, with due apologies, put it that it is the most ridiculous supposition? There is deliberate villification campaign against this. The question of centralizing does not arise. The subject pertains to the State Government, So, where does the question of centralizing purchase of anything come across in this matter? We are looking at restructaring the ICDS beacause, as you will appreciate, while India is *going to be the youngest populated country in the world, we have alarmingly high* malnutrition prevalent which is happening. We have gone into the process fo decentralizing. But what we are doing Centrally is to put pressure on the State Governments to ensure that programmes reach the actual beneficiaries. We are upgrading the FN Boards so that the access to nutritional information can be made available. If the mothers of ICDS children had known about nutrition, why would there have been malnutrition, in the first place? This is what we need to address. We are losing mothers at birth. And we are also losing young infants at birth. So, the question of Centralizing does not arise; I categorically say this. And there is a deliberate campaign to confuse the country about this issue; I am very, very clear about it. This subject belongs to the Staie Governments. We will retain the authority, since we give money for that, so that they can become accountable to us.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Sir, my second supplementary is this. Since you have brought up the issue of malnutrition, Madam, the ICDS covers childern only between three and six, and actually, the malnutrition begins at birth, up to three. So, do you have any specific plans to reduce the malnutrition level since you are redoing the ICDS programme to include children from zero to three ? And how will you monitor what kind of qualitative food is being given to the States? Who will monitor the whole programme to give better results?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: You are absolutely right. Sir , she is absolutely right. Actually, we deal with the children before they are born. We look after the pregnant mother. We monitor her throughout her pregnancy, and ensure that she has immunisation. We also ensure that her weights are all right. That is why, we have brought in legislations, to support us, so that we could ban child marriages. Child marriages also contribute to high infant mortality and high maternal mortality. For strengthening of our FN Boards across the *country, at every district level, they must have access to nutritional knowledge . It is not* enough for us to sweepingly say, 'Oh, Self-Help Groups will cook and give! Self-Help Groups do not have the knowledge. That is why, women themselves are more nutritious in the first place. We also need infrastructure. Some Members of Parliament have been kind enough to contribute their monies towards building up of *anganwadis.* We do not have built-up *aganwadis.* Children are studying under the trees, playing in the dust and cooking in those *anganwadis* where there is no built-up infrastructure. It is terriying. The prospects are also terrifying, Sir, this micro-nutrition and fortification of food is something which has irrefutably been accepted across the global experiences as well as India. Why do we give our children vitamin-enriched food? Why do we advertise on the television about fortified Bournvitas or any other products? Why is it that that is not done for the children of the poor? So, we are ensuring that there is an awareness. In restructuring of this , we are making sure that the nutrition and health component of the scheme, IYCF, which is going to be put in place, is there. And we are also going to see that the pre-school eduction component improves. We have raised the salaries of the *anganwadi* teachers and helpers to ensure quality input amongst themselves as well. And also , Sir, I would like, through you to reach out to all the hon. Members in the State. Some of the State Governments give power to the local elected representative to appoint an *anganwadi* teacher. MLAs will appoint an *anganwadi* teacher! You expect the *anganwadi* teacher to work for the welfare of the

children when she is appointed by a public representative! She is busy being the appointee of a public representative. And the State Governments too use these ladies of mine for Census survey and other programmes, and don't pay them additionally. I have decided that the State Governments should also pay additional salaries to the *anganwadi* teachers for getting any additional work done from them to ensure that they can concentrate on their own...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: And, Sir, they would be able to contribute towards the welfare and development of the child, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Many factors contribute to malnutrition, including fluoride water, cooking in aluminium pots...(*Interruptions*)... You don't want to know?...(*Interruptions*)... They don't want to know, Sir!...(*Interruptions*)...

MS. MABEL REBELLO: Sir, we are with the hon. Minister on this issue... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we proceed? Shri Seelam...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, the hon. Minister has covered the details of the work being allocated to *anganwadi* workers. She has also mentioned about the building portion.

I would like to stress on two aspects. One, what about capacity building? You have yourself expressed that the public representatives are recruiting. What is your thinking on capacity building to improve her functional ability *vis-a-vis* the requirements of revised , strengthened ICDS ? That is number one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One question, please. ....(*Interruptions*)....One question only.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: This is part of the quesiton, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please finish quickly.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Let him speak.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Okay. Secondly, what is the Ministry's thinking on the children who are orphaned because of their parents being HIV infected or affected? This is also a vital issue because most of the children are in the rural areas. Would the hon. Minister clarify this?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, the hon. member has actually raised the real issue. You need Anganwadi buildings if you want to have Anganwadis where the children are safe. We need clean toilets where the children have toilet training and clean sanitation. We need clean drinking water if you want to cook the food. We have to give the basic infrastructure and then talk about the other things. We have already addressed the Planning Commission where we have told them that in the next Plan we have to construct pucca Anganwadi Centres phasewise along with clean sanitation, water and store room. This should be made mandatory before we do it.

As for the HIV-orphaned children, I am proud to say that neither the Ministry of Women and Child Development nor my Anganwadi teachers, helpers and the people who look after the children at the grassroots level do discriminate any child who comes to the Anganwadi, irrespective or being HIV positive or negative, or his caste or community. They are all

looked after with the same affection and strength as their mothers would do. We do that. We don't discriminate.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, my question relates to the nutritional status of children covered by the ICDS and other programmes of the Government. We have read with great consternation that there is a move on behalf of the Ministry to encourage packed food and also believe that some MPs have written to the hon. Minister on this. Today, we have read that there is some conflict between the Planning Commission and the Ministry on this. So, this is not just a question of wrong media reports which she has said in answer to the first question. It seems that the Planning Commission is itself taking cognizance of this. So, what I would like to know from the hon. Minister is whether she can give a categorical assurance to this House that her Ministry is not interested in encouraging packed foods, moving away from the present scheme of hot cooked food which is really the best nutritional food for children. By doing so, you will also be ensuring that the big multinational companies and other vested interests would not utilise your programmes for improving nutritional status of children for their own benefits. Can you give us an assurance on this?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Brindaji, while I appreciate your concern about it ....*(Interruptions)*....I will answer. First of all, to assume and attribute motive to any Minister or Ministry with good intentions that we are doing is extremely objectionable. Why is it that everybody else has no concern about multi-nationals taking advantage of us? Why do you feel it so? If you feel that we are not capable or I am not competent or that I will give way to the vested interests of the multi-nationals than to the better interests of the children, then I don't think that I should be sitting here. Let us get this cleared, first of all. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Please answer my question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are other supplementaries. Please. ...*(Interruptions)*...There are other questions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: She is right in raising the question about the Planning Commission. You will appreciate that the Planning Commission does not have the same constitutional recognition that we have. ...*(Interruptions)*...There is no conflict of interest. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: No, that is not the issue. Are you pushing packed food? That is the question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Please let me complete it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I have only one question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Here is the answer.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I should be allowed to answer this once and for all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are other supplementary questions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, the Chairman of the Planning Commission is the Prime Minister. She is defying the Prime Minister. Sir, the Prime Minister is the Chairman of the Planning Commission. Does she know that? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are other supplementary questions. Please allow the Minister to answer. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, she is saying that...*(Interruptions)*.... She is totally.....*(Interruptions)*...What is she saying?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. Ahluwaliaji, I would request you to sit down. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, the fact of the matter is, if I am answering this question in this House, I am accountable to the House. Therefore, they should give due regard to what I am saying. There is no compromise on the question of children's safety, nutrition and welfare. The very fact that the Government of India has raised....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Are you pushing packaged food?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't interrput. ...*(Interruptions)*...Please don't interrupt.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, may I remind you that the Planning Commission itself said in the Tenth Five Year Plan, when the last Government had formulated this Plan, not to give hot cooked meal? It was the Planning Commission who said this in the Tenth Five Year Plan, when they were sitting here. So, don't talk about it.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: But what is the answer to my question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have heard the answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Is the Ministry pushing packaged food? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have other supplementary questions. Shri Arun Shourie. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I have not got the reply. Is the Ministry pushing packaged food? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The answer is complete...*(Interruptions)*...Please allow the supplementary to proceed.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: What is the answer? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister has given the answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...If the answer is unsatisfactory, please raise other queries separately. Mr. Shourie, please go ahead.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: She does not want to say that they are not pushing it...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Brindaji, what is pushing? What does 'pushing' mean?

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Pushing means, encouraging. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow the supplementary to proceed. Please don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*...You are depriving other Members from putting questions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Is the Minister aware of a comprehensive note submitted by a member of another non-constitutional body, called the National Advisory Board, showing

complete falsification of Governmental records on nutrition, and thereby artificially showing the decline in the proportion of children who are malnourished? Secondly, is she aware of the fortification of food in Gujarat and the benefits it has had? what is the Government's assessment of that?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, Gujarat is not the only State which does fortification. There is international experience as well as national awareness on how valuable fortification of food is. There is no dispute on that. I have myself said on record that we must fortify food, we must give nutrition ...*(Interruptions)*...I did not catch his other point.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I would like to know whether you are aware of a comprehensive note circulated by a Member of the National Advisory Board, another non-constitutional body, showing the wholesale falsification of malnutrition statistics in Government surveys and in Government records, which artificially shows that the proportion of children who are malnourished, has declined.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I don't think there is any falsification. It has not declined. That is precisely what we are saying. I appreciate what you are talking about. But it has not declined. The question put by her addresses this issue when she said that it has declined only by one per cent. She has said it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Reservation for SCs/STs in private sector

*245. SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAJHI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether private companies follow reservation policy for SCs/STs, with regard to appointment for technical/non-technical posts in their companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of companies following these norms;

(c) if not, whether Government would give any direction about it; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) In pursuance of the commitment contained in the National Common Minimum Programme to initiate a dialogue with Industry and other associations to fulfil the aspirations of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes youth, a Group of Ministers was formed. The Group met five times and also held consultations with the representatives of Apex Industry Associations.

To carry forward the process of dialogue, a Coordination Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. This Committee is serviced by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. The Committee has held